

CHAPTER 9 LAND USE ELEMENT

While every element of the Comprehensive Plan is central to implementation of the City's vision, goals, policies, objectives and strategies, it is this Land Use Element that is most influential in terms of everyday decision-making. The Land Use Element is most often (and properly) cited in support or denial of zoning and other land use changes. The most important graphic of the Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Plan Map, contained and described in this element. It is that map which will continue to be cited as an overall expression of the City's land use policy, though care must be taken to interpret that map with due regard for this text and its goals, policies, strategies, tools, and objectives.

In many ways, the Land Use Element is the central organizing element of the entire Comprehensive Plan. Natural resource protection goals and policies are necessarily implied within the Land Use Element, where they have not been reiterated or referred to explicitly. Community facilities and services plans are based in large part on the land use patterns and future development potential described in this Land Use Element. The recommended land use patterns reflect the City's vision and history. Housing policies are integrated in the land use recommendations of the land use plan. Economic development objectives are fulfilled, if not directly recognizable, in terms of the overall design of the land use plan. Transportation plans influence land use patterns and vice versa, and those occurrences are taken into account.

This chapter begins with data and descriptions of how land use has evolved in Roswell since 1969. It is important to recognize and build on prior planning efforts, which include a "701" plan during the era of urban renewal, a development plan in the late 1970s, and Comprehensive Plans prepared for the years 2010 and 2020. The historic data have more than historical value, however, in the sense that Roswell today is a product of prior development patterns and land use outcomes of earlier decades.

A detailed existing land use inventory was provided in the 2020 Plan. Existing land use was updated in this rewrite to account for changes between 2000 and 2004. Major development trends during that time period are summarized here. The 2020 Plan provided a detailed analysis of land use issues, including possible transitions in land use, and prospects for incompatible land use arrangements, among others. Much of that analysis in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan is still relevant for the 2025 planning horizon and is therefore retained in this Land Use Element update. The 2020 Plan organized the discussion of land use issues around eight planning areas, which at the time included some unincorporated fringe areas north and northeast of Roswell. The planning areas have been retained in this revised Land Use Element to the extent that the detailed descriptions of land use trends and issues provided according to those eight planning areas. Unincorporated lands have been dropped from the description and assessment in this update for the year 2025.

Since the 2020 Plan was adopted in the year 2000, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs adopted new minimum planning standards (those effective January 1, 2004). Compliance with that set of planning standards necessitated some additions to the 2020 Land Use Element as adopted in 2000. The 2020 Land Use Element, however, provided extensive information on infrastructure needs, protection of natural resources, identification of infill and redevelopment potential, and other factors directly affecting land use (not required to be discussed in the Land Use Element at that time but which received adequate treatment in the

2020 Plan). To the extent new trends have emerged, or the information in the 2020 Plan would now be incorrect or outdated, this Land Use Element has been modified, updated, or corrected.

This chapter represents a minor update of the adopted 2020 Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element. The land use plan, which has been amended in minor ways since the 2020 Plan was adopted in 2000, is still an accurate reflection of the City's vision, goals and policies. There are some minor changes made to the map to account for differences between actual and planned land uses, but these changes from the 2020 Plan are quite limited in substance.

Finally, the framework for regional planning has further evolved since the 2020 Land Use Element was written. Since the 2020 Comprehensive Plan was prepared and adopted, the Atlanta Regional Commission substantially revised its Regional Development Plan. That new regional plan necessitated significant changes to the Land Use Element adopted in the 2020 Plan in order to realign local and regional policy statements and expectations for land use programs.

HISTORIC LAND USE TRENDS, 1969-1999

Historical Land Use Patterns, 1969

Roswell's first land use plan was developed in 1969 and 1970 using funds from the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. In 1969, Roswell covered only about 2,300 acres and had a population of approximately 5,500 and 1,600 housing units. The city limits extended only as far southwest as Willeo Road, the Lake Charles subdivision to the northwest, Alpine Drive to the north, part of Grimes Bridge Road to the northeast, and Big Creek on the east. At that time, the City had annexed land for what later developed as the North Point subdivision.

The overall population density of the City in 1969 was only 6.2 persons per acre. The City in 1969 was generally served by public water. A sewerage collection system serving all of the City's residential areas was not available, but a general obligation bond referendum had been passed for the construction of a sewer system.

Table 9.1
Roswell's Land Use in 1969

Land Use	Acreage	Percent of Developed Land	Percent of Total Land
Residential – single family	850	68	36
Residential – two family	19	2	1
Residential – multi-family	22	2	1
Public and semi-public	76	6	3
Commercial	71	6	3
Industrial	13	1	1
Streets and highways	189	15	8
Total developed land	1,240	100	53
Vacant	1,107		47
Total land within the City	2,347		100

Source: Field Survey, Kidd-Wright Associates, Inc., November 1969. In Kidd-Wright Associates, Inc. March 1970. Existing Land Use and Housing Study, Roswell, Georgia.

The urban area in 1969, as defined by the Existing Land Use and Housing Study, extended (in a clockwise direction) west to Willeo Creek (the Cobb County line), a straight line running east-west north of Jones Road and Mansell Road, Foe Killer Creek, and a large area east of the North Fulton Freeway (Georgia 400). Much of the land in the “urban” area was scattered rural residential uses, but “rapid” residential development was occurring outside the city limits of Roswell. The first phase of the Martins Landing development was underway along Riverside Road, with perhaps a few dozen homes already constructed. The Existing Land Use and Housing Study notes that Roswell had excellent potential for development of relatively high-income housing. It notes further that the regional development trend was one of outward mobility of higher income groups from Atlanta to the north.

Multi-family development within the city limits existed at Mimosa Boulevard, Renee Drive, Frazier Street, Grove Way, and Myrtle Street. Such developments included 62 units operated by the Roswell Housing Authority. Areas that were considered “blighted” in 1969, or at least potentially qualifying for inclusion in redevelopment projects, were residential neighborhoods along the following roads: Pleasant Hill Street, Bush Street, Sloan Street, and Webb Street. Areas identified as “rehabilitation areas” included Zion Circle, Minhinnette Drive, South Atlanta Street at Jones Drive, Bannister Drive, and West Side Drive.

Commercial development in 1969 was oriented primarily toward U.S. Highway 19 (now SR 9), with older businesses concentrated at Crabapple Road and Alpharetta Street. The study notes that commercial activities in 1970 were “scattered” along the highway in a “random strip fashion.” Moreover, commercial strip development was continuing in a “random, leapfrog pattern” north on U.S. 19 outside the city limits. However, the strip commercial development was found to be not as severe as what was occurring south of Roswell along Roswell Road in Sandy Springs. Roswell had a very small industrial area, containing only six industries, operating close to residential neighborhoods.

Historical Land Use Trends, 1969-1979

Roswell adopted a Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan in 1970. However, it quickly became outdated. Due to rapid in-migration to Roswell and the north Fulton County area in the 1970s, Roswell’s basic character underwent a dramatic transformation from a small urban fringe town to a rapidly growing suburban city. Roswell grew from a population of 5,430 in 1970 to more than 20,000 persons by 1978. Major suburban retail development along Alpharetta Street and Holcomb Bridge Road began to occur by 1972. Industrial development had not occurred to any significant extent, although the potential for industrial development was recognized in the Roswell Development Plan (1978). In 1975, commercial employment densities were approximately 6.5 employees per acre, while industrial-wholesale uses averaged approximately 13 employees per acre.

Factors that contributed to the rapid transformation of Roswell during the 1970s included, in addition to an aggressive annexation program: freeway access via Georgia 400 to Perimeter Mall and adjacent employment centers; the availability of large tracts of developable and relatively inexpensive land; increasing disposable incomes of Roswell’s residents; and the existence of public services and utilities. Land use problems and trends during the 1970s included extensive strip commercial development along Alpharetta Street and Holcomb Bridge

Road, environmental degradation, and “sprawl and poor land use patterns” (Roswell Development Plan 1978).

Land uses in Roswell’s planning in 1975 are summarized in Table 9.2 below.

Table 9.2
Land Use in 1975 - Roswell Planning Area

Land Use Category	1975 Acreage	Percent of Developed Area	Percent of Total Area
Residential, very low to low-medium density	3,180	76	20
Residential, medium to high density	155	4	1
Commercial	175	4	1
Office-Professional	50	1	--
Light Industrial-Wholesale	55	1	--
Government-Institutional	150	4	1
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	420	10	3
Total Developed Area	4,185	100	27
Vacant and Agricultural	11,557	---	73
Total Area	15,742	---	100

Source: Roswell Development Plan, 1978 (Table 9). Percentages calculated by Roswell Planning Staff, 1999.

Roswell began development of a new land use plan in 1975. The Roswell Development Plan, however, was not adopted until Fall 1978. Roswell, by the late 1970s, had substantially expanded its urban area to Willeo Creek, Woodstock Road and Hardscrabble Road to the north, Foe Killer Creek along the northeast, and a substantial area of land east of Georgia 400. Single family residential developments were scattered in all areas of the City. By 1979, major subdivisions had been constructed, including Northpoint, Martins Landing, and Saddle Creek. Subdivision development was also occurring along the north side of Old Alabama Road.

Public sewerage was still a limiting factor on growth in several areas of Roswell by the late 1970s. However, Fulton County was planning construction of a sewer interceptor system to serve most areas within the city limits by the mid-to-late 1980s.

Diversification, 1979-1985

The Roswell Department of Zoning and Inspections (now Community Development) completed an inventory of rezoning actions that were approved between January 1979 and June 1985. These figures, summarized in Table 9.3 below, provide insights as to the nature and type of development activity during that time period.

As can be inferred from Table 9.3, Roswell, in addition to providing for more single-family subdivisions, expanded its multiple-family land (and housing stock) and substantially expanded its non-residential land supply through rezoning. Based on this rezoning information, the Roswell staff compared the numbers to the land use projections for the year 1995 as provided in the Roswell Development Plan. The staff concluded that the City had greatly exceeded many of the future land use projections. In particular (assuming rapid development of rezoned parcels, as was generally the case), by 1985 the City had already exceeded its commercial acreage

projected for 1995; there was almost double the acres of office-professional zoning/use that was predicted in the development plan for the year 1995. Industrial zoning was four times the amount in 1985 that was projected for 1995. Interestingly, though not noted in the 1985 report, Roswell had rezoned almost 600 acres of land for medium to high-density residential (i.e., multi-family and townhouse) use, which was roughly equal to the plan's projection for medium and medium-high residential land in 1995. Hence, in a period of just seven and one-half years, Roswell had met or exceeded the expected pace of development for commercial, office, light industrial, and multiple-family residential uses. During this period, the City had, through the rezoning process, provided for a diversified mix of residential uses (including apartments and townhouses) and a substantial commercial and industrial economic base.

Table 9.3
Acres Rezoned by Selected Zoning District, 1979-1985,
City of Roswell

Zoning Abbreviation	Name of Zoning District	Acres Rezoned, 1/79 to 6/85
E-2	Single Family Residential District	121
R-1	Single Family Residential District	172
R-2	Single Family Residential District	462
R-3	Multiple Family Residential District	270
R-4	Multiple Family Residential District	121
R-TH	Fee Simple Townhouse District	188
C-3	Highway Commercial District	291
I-1	Light Industrial District	502
O-P	Office Professional	272
OPMS	Office Professional Multi-Story District	95

Source: Roswell Department of Zoning and Inspections. July 1985. Summary of Rezoning Petitions Approved January 1979 to June 1985: Implications for Planning.

Residential Subdivision Platting Activity, 1980-1989

Table 9.4
Residential Subdivision Lots and Acreage Approved, 1980-1989

Year	Number of Lots	Acreage
1980	483	135.2
1981	678	222.0
1982	472	112.7
1983	758	440.1
1984	1,377	719.3
1985	501	364.9
1986	158	103.5
1987	467*	166.16*
1988	390	275.1
1989	153	124.5
Total, 1980-1989	5,437	2,663.9*

Note: Figures include fee simple townhouses. * Incomplete data. Source: Roswell Community Development Department, 1999.

In 1980, the Roswell Planning Staff began compiling statistics regarding the number of lots and acreage involved in approved final plats. During the decade of the 1980s, subdividers in Roswell platted almost 5,500 lots on approximately 2,800 acres. Table 9.4 summarizes that information.

Prior to the development of the Comprehensive Plan 2020, the most recent acreage estimates for land use were prepared for the year 1990. Table 9.5 summarizes land use existing in 1990.

Table 9.5
Roswell Land Use in 1990

Land Use Category	Approximate Acreage - 1990	Percent of Total Area
Residential	10,977	51.5
Commercial and office	1,105	5.2
Industrial	510	2.4
Public and semi-public	310	1.5
Parks and open space	720	3.4
Historic (mixed use)	540	2.5
Right-of-way	1,334	6.3
Vacant	5,129	24.0
Undevelopable	680	3.2
Total	21,305	100%

Source: Roswell Comprehensive Plan 2010

Rezoning Activity, July 1985 to 1999, and Implications

The Roswell Planning Staff undertook an analysis of the rezonings approved since the 1985 Summary of Rezoning Petitions Approved January 1979 to June 1985 was completed. That analysis was done in an effort to identify major land use trends during that period. In addition, such information is useful to the Planning Commission in considering the amount of land zoned for particular categories, which is one of many criteria for considering rezoning requests. The analysis excluded rezonings that were changes of conditions or rezonings of properties that were already partially zoned for the approved zoning category. Attention was also given to the amount of property zoned “from” particular categories as well as “to” various zoning districts, so as to gauge the “net” result of rezoning actions during the fifteen-year period.

Although Roswell rezoned approximately 215 acres to the I-1, Light Industrial, Zoning District, approximately 203 acres were rezoned from the I-1 category. There was very little increase in light industrial acreage during the time period, suggesting that land reserved for light industrial use has been sufficient and/or developed for other uses. Given few, if any, recent requests for I-1 zoning, it appears that the City reached the end of its light industrial land supply given market trends by 1999.

Although the City rezoned 102 acres to O-P, Office Professional from July 1985 to December 1999, it also zoned 99 acres from O-P to other categories, leaving in effect, no net increase in the number of acres of office professional zoning.

However, there was a marked trend toward rezoning to the City's "multi-story" zoning categories during the time period. Approximately 276 acres were rezoned to office commercial, office professional, and hospital multi-story zoning districts. The implication of this finding is that the office market shifted from offices for individual establishments to a planned mix of office uses in mid-rise structures. Most of these "multi-story" rezonings occurred in the mid-to-late 1990s.

Commercial zoning, primarily highway commercial, increased by 261 acres from 1985 to 1999, suggesting that opportunities for retail and service development were still strong in the marketplace. However, almost all of the areas identified in the City's land use plan for future commercial development by 1999 were largely built-out, and the City as a result denied commercial zoning requests that were found to be inconsistent with the land use plan.

With regard to multi-family development, there was an increase of approximately 400 acres during the time period. All but approximately 86 acres (most within the "Archstone" apartment complex east of Georgia 400 on Holcomb Bridge Road, which is zoned R-4A), was zoned R-3 which allows up to eight units per acre. Many of the R-3 rezonings occurred during the 1993-1995 time period and were townhouse developments. The higher level of multi-family rezonings approved (not to mention those that were requested but denied), along with more recent trends such as development of townhouses in commercial and industrially-zoned parcels, suggests that there was a significant market for R-3 multiple-family residential development during the time period.

Residential Subdivision Platting Activity, 1990-1998

Final subdivision platting in the 1990s amounted to less than one-half of the number of lots and acres platted in Roswell during the 1980s. However, the amount of subdivision activity was quite significant. Table 9.6 summarizes the annual trends. Note that subdivision platting activity trailed off noticeably in the late 1990s, as vacant residential parcels in Roswell became increasingly scarce. Platting activity for 1999 dropped below 1997 and 1998 paces.

Table 9.6
Residential Subdivision Lots and Acreage Approved, 1990-1998

Year	Number of Lots	Acreage
1990	122	73.3
1991	3	5.0
1992	275	120.5
1993	439	221.8
1994	547	302.5
1995	368	167.5
1996	286	190.2
1997	107	56.0
1998	150	102.2
Total, 1990-1998	2,297	1,239.0

Source: Roswell Community Development Department, 1999.

Land Use as of 1999

In 1999, Cooper-Ross conducted a detailed inventory of existing land uses. The current use of every property in the City (by planning areas, which included some unincorporated land) was identified. Many sources of information were used: the Fulton County Tax Assessor's office maintains existing land use data, which were updated through analysis of aerial photographs of the area, and through field checks where the actual use was unclear. Zoning maps and inventories of public properties were also helpful in determining actual land usage.

Table 9.7 presents a summary of the acres of land by land use category in the City.

Table 9.7
Existing Land Use in Roswell, 1999

Land Use Category	City of Roswell	
	Acres	Percent
Single-Family Residential	12,178.5	49.6%
Multi-Family Residential	1,245.3	5.1%
<i>Subtotal—Residential</i>	<i>13,423.8</i>	<i>54.7%</i>
Office/Professional	398.1	1.6%
Commercial/Retail	903.5	3.7%
<i>Subtotal—Commercial</i>	<i>1,301.7</i>	<i>5.3%</i>
Industrial	408.6	1.7%
Public/Institutional	966.4	3.9%
Park/Rec./Conservation	1,340.7	5.5%
Trans/Comm/Utilities	120.0	0.5%
Roads	2,448.1	10.0%
<i>Subtotal--T.C.U.</i>	<i>2,568.1</i>	<i>10.5%</i>
Water	572.6	2.3%
Vacant Land	3,971.6	16.2%
<i>Subtotal--Undeveloped</i>	<i>4,544.3</i>	<i>18.5%</i>
Total	24,553.5	100.0%

Source: Cooper Ross, 2000.

EXISTING LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Single-Family Residential

Defined: Residences consisting of individual houses, usually on separate lots, and often developed in subdivisions.

Single-family development occupies the vast majority of land in Roswell, reflecting its modern roots as a suburban bedroom community. From the historic city center, subdivisions extend out to the east, west and north. Although new residential development clearly clustered around the historic city center during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the burst of suburbanization over the past three decades has spread single-family subdivisions from East Cobb County across Roswell, Alpharetta, and unincorporated John's Creek and Shakerag to north DeKalb and Gwinnett counties, in a relatively seamless continuum.

Multi-Family Residential

Defined: Residential buildings containing two or more dwelling units, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and apartments.

Since 1970, multi-family residential land in the City has increased from 41 acres to over 1,200 acres. Since 1970, however, the City has grown considerably through annexation, such that the percentage of the City's land area in multi-family use has increased only from about 2 percent to a little over 4 percent. Multi-family uses have developed primarily in "central nodal" areas along major thoroughfares. Townhouse developments and garden apartment communities represent the largest share of multi-family uses, characteristically at suburban densities of 6 or 8 to 14 dwelling units per acre. The City's largest concentration of multi-family development rings the GA 400/Holcomb Bridge Road interchange with such townhome and apartment communities as Riverwood Village, Roswell Gables, Wood Creek, Belcourt and Roundtree. Other notable concentrations occur off Atlanta Street at the Chattahoochee River (the old "Beau Rivage" apartments, River Mill, Roswell Springs, and Riverwalk), and in the Nesbit Ferry/Holcomb Bridge Road area (Tree Ridge, Riversong Manor, Champions Green) (part of the Eastside annexation). Multi-family complexes have also been developed in the Alpharetta Highway commercial corridor north of Holcomb Bridge Road, including Morris Manor, Eagle Crest and the Roswell Commons townhomes off Mansell Road, and Roswell Greenhouse and Rosemont complexes south of Hembree Road.

Office/Professional

Defined: Developments predominantly occupied by establishments that primarily provide a service as opposed to the sale of goods or merchandise. Examples include medical or engineering offices, real estate offices, insurance agencies, and corporate headquarters.

Few office/professional uses presently exist in Roswell outside of predominantly commercial/retail areas. Some 400 acres (about 1 percent of the City's land area) were developed with stand-alone office uses, scattered throughout the City, as of 1999. Most of those uses are low intensity one- and two-story buildings. With the exceptions of the Kimberly-Clark complex on Holcomb Bridge Road at GA 400 and the Roswell Business Center across from North Fulton Regional Hospital, corporate campuses, corporate office centers and office parks such as Windward in Alpharetta and Perimeter Center in Sandy Springs are not represented in Roswell. In some limited cases where existing single-family houses have been negatively impacted by nearby commercial development, office redevelopment has occurred (such as Colonial Park Drive off Grimes Bridge Road). Office/professional uses are often allowed in locations that provide a transition in land use intensity between higher-intensity uses (such as commercial/retail or major highways) and single-family neighborhoods.

Commercial

Defined: Commercial developments predominantly occupied by establishments that offer goods or merchandise for sale or rent, and other commercial uses that do not operate in "office" settings. Such uses include stores, shopping centers, hotels, restaurants, gasoline stations, automobile body shops, physical fitness centers, markets, building supply centers, and personal service and business service establishments.

Commercial development within the City of Roswell consists of both sales and service uses. These uses occur on individual lots clustered with other commercial uses, or within strip shopping centers. There is no clearly defined central business district in Roswell; the historic center along Atlanta Street and Canton Street predominantly consists of small shops and offices

in a revitalized historic setting. This area is the institutional and cultural center of the City, including assets south of Canton Street, on Mimosa Boulevard, such as Bulloch Hall and Barrington Hall, the City's oldest churches and cemeteries, and City Hall and the City auditorium. Outside of the historic center, the pattern of commercial development in the City consists primarily of community service shopping centers and specialty stores clustered around major road intersections, and highway- and business-oriented strip commercial corridors along Alpharetta Highway and Holcomb Bridge Road.

Most of the commercial development in the City has occurred over the past thirty years, and is clearly "suburban" in character and density. The oldest major commercial node established outside of the historic center focused around the Alpharetta Highway/Holcomb Bridge Road intersection and the Roswell Town Center shopping center (i.e., the "Town Center"). This area is now home to many other shopping centers, including King's Market, Crossville Square, Brannon Square, Roswell Market, Grimes Square, Crossings Roswell and (farther to the north) Roswell Exchange and (farther to the south) Riverview Plaza and King's Creek. In between, fast food restaurants, auto service establishments, banks, personal services and consumer shopping stores have filled in, forming a classic commercial "strip." A second major commercial node grew up around the Holcomb Bridge Road/GA 400 interchange, including the Village Shopping Center, Plaza at Roswell, Holcomb Bridge Crossing, Holcomb Place and the Market Center at Holcomb Woods. While the character of the "Roswell Town Center" area is primarily consumer-oriented, the "Holcomb Bridge Crossing" area includes more business- and traveler-oriented establishments, such as motels, business supplies and copy shops, as well as consumer-oriented shopping stores.

More recently, much of the commercial development has occurred in shopping centers, often organized around a major tenant such as a grocery store or "super-store" such as Target or Office Depot, although some major developments such as Home Depot have been built on individual lots close to other commercial properties. Several key commercial nodes are evident today at Nesbit Ferry/Holcomb Bridge Road (the Holcomb Corners and Rivermont Square shopping centers and nearby spin-off strip commercial development), the shopping center on Holcomb Bridge Road at Eves Road (in front of the new Centennial High School), and at Crabapple Road/Arnold Mill Road across from the Crabapple and North Farm shopping centers (both of which are in Alpharetta). All of these shopping centers were established in unincorporated Fulton County and subsequently annexed into Roswell before the year 2000.

A major commercial node has also formed along Woodstock Road/Crossville Road at King Road (including Home Depot) and nearby on Woodstock Road at Hardscrabble Road (the Roswell Corners Shopping Center). Neighborhood-level developments have been established at Crossville Road/Crabapple Road (Crabapple Square), Crabapple Road at Hardscrabble Road, and at the Marietta Highway/Coleman Road intersection.

Light Industrial

Defined: Land dedicated to warehousing, distribution or wholesale trade facilities as well as assembly, fabrication or manufacturing facilities, processing plants, and factories.

With few exceptions, industrial uses in Roswell are located almost exclusively in the corridor along Old Roswell Road north of Mansell Road and extending to the commercial strip along Alpharetta Highway. Light manufacturing, distribution and business park uses are located throughout this corridor in such developments as the Northfield Business Park and Hembree Park. Two small office/warehouse business park developments are located outside of the

primary industrial corridor: a small business park on Holcomb Woods Parkway near the Holcomb Bridge Road/Old Alabama Road intersection, and a small isolated business park on Holcomb Bridge Road near Champions Green. Another minor industrial use is a self-storage mini-warehouse facility off Alpharetta Street on Horton Drive (south of Holcomb Bridge Road). In addition, a small concentration of industrial uses are located in aging structures south of City Hall.

Public and Institutional

Defined: State, federal or local government uses, and quasi-public institutions. Governmental uses include city hall, fire stations, libraries, post offices and public schools (but not parks). Institutional uses include churches, cemeteries, meeting halls, and other private non-profit uses that provide services to the public.

Public and institutional uses are typically not concentrated in specific locales, and this is the case in Roswell. While the majority of governmental administrative uses are located in the historic center of Roswell, schools and churches are located throughout the community. The City Hall, Library and Cultural Arts Center form an identifiable “government center” near (but not oriented to) the Alpharetta Street/Canton Street/Magnolia Street intersection at the Heart of Roswell Park. Other City offices are located off Oxbo Road, and at the intersection of Hembree Road and Maxwell Road. Fulton County human services facilities are also located in the historic central area at 89 Grove Way.

Other than elementary and secondary schools, major public and institutional uses in the City outside of the historic center include North Fulton Regional Hospital on Alpharetta Highway north of Hembree Road, the old county work camp and maintenance facilities (now used primarily for school bus parking) at the easternmost edge of the City on Hembree Road at Maxwell Road, and the Green Lawn Cemetery at Alpharetta Highway and Mansell Road.

Parks, Recreation and Conservation

Defined: Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, etc.

Roswell maintains an extensive system of public parks and recreation facilities, as described in the Community Facilities Element. These parks serve all levels of recreational demand, from small urban sites to major district parks, from passive areas for rest and reflection, to active athletic fields to indoor recreation centers. The City also operates three parks in conjunction with Fulton County schools, and is home to the Chattahoochee Nature Center (on the Chattahoochee River along Willeo Road) and the Vickery Creek Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. These many assets provide a richness and variety of experience demanded by the City’s residents and intrinsic to the quality of life expected in the City. As noted elsewhere, the City vastly expanded its parks acreage between 2000 and 2004.

Private recreation uses include amenity areas in residential subdivisions (usually including swimming and tennis facilities and often a community center), and major golf courses within large planned residential communities, including Willow Springs, Horseshoe Bend and the nationally recognized Brookfield West.

Agriculture and Forestry

Defined: Land being actively farmed, including crop cultivation or livestock operations, or set aside for commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting as an agricultural pursuit.

There are no lands in Roswell being farmed or under active forestry operation.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities

Defined: This category includes such uses as electric or gas substations, power generation plants, sewage treatment plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, streets and highways.

Streets and highways consume the vast majority of land classified in Roswell as "T.C.U."; there are no railroads traversing the City. Major T.C.U. uses other than transportation facilities include the Big Creek Water Reclamation Plant at the southwestern corner of the City, the John's Creek Water Reclamation Plant near the southeastern corner of the City, and the BellSouth maintenance and service facility on Wills Road immediately south of Alpharetta. These three uses comprise almost 90 percent of the "communication and utilities" portion of T.C.U.; the remaining few acres are scattered throughout the City in such uses as electric power substations.

Vacant/Undeveloped

Defined: Land where there are no buildings or other improvements or that is not otherwise being used for a specific purpose (including lakes and other bodies of water), and lands where development has been abandoned or where deteriorated, vacant buildings are located. (Land in public ownership but held in its natural state are shown under the Parks, Open Space and Conservation category.)

Undeveloped lands are relatively scarce now, in comparatively smaller acreages, and scattered throughout the City. As of 1999, about 18 percent of the City remained undeveloped, including both lands that are vacant but developable and lands that are relatively unusable due to ponds, flood plain or wetlands on the property. Undeveloped lands are relatively evenly spread throughout the City, with the most developed area being the historic city center, and the least developed area being the northernmost portion of the City, north of Woodstock and Hardscrabble Roads. This pattern of scattered undeveloped lands suggests strongly that land development activities in the future will continue to fill in smaller, vacant properties surrounded by existing development.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS, 2000 TO 2004

The City matured during this time period, as vacant land continued to be developed for residential subdivisions, retail spaces, churches, institutions, and businesses. The City responded to growth pressures with extensive new parks, a new fire station, and government facilities at Hembree Road and Maxwell Road. The Fulton County School System also added new schools in Roswell during this time period.

As of 2000, only 16 percent of the City's land area was vacant, some of which was found to be undevelopable because of wetlands, flood plains, and steep slope conditions. During this time period, Roswell reached a stage of near build-out, where development patterns were relatively well-established and "Greenfield" land was becoming increasingly scarce. Redevelopment had not begun to any significant degree, due to the continuing high property values of the built environment, although there were some signs of redevelopment on the horizon.¹

Continued Single-Family Residential Development

As noted in the Housing Element of this Comprehensive Plan (see Table 2.3), Roswell added more than 2,300 housing units to its housing stock from the time the 2000 U.S. Census was taken to September 2004. The vast majority (1,843) of the units were detached, single-family residences. The locations of single-family development occurring during this time period were scattered throughout most sections of the City. Large, planned subdivisions such as "Ellard" and phases of the "Edenwilde" subdivision were developed during this time period. There was also significant subdivision and housing start activity in the northwestern corner of the City, north of the City of Mountain Park.

Extensive residential infill development also occurred during this time. That trend was especially evident in southwest Roswell (west of SR 9 and south of Crossville Road). It appears that more than half of the vacant land zoned for single-family residences was developed for single-family, detached, residential subdivisions in southwest Roswell during the time period. Infill residential development was less extensive, but noticeable, in parts of Roswell north of Crossville Road west of SR 9. Little single-family residential development occurred east of Georgia 400, and much of that occurred on platted lots within the Horseshoe Bend subdivision.

Townhouse Development

Every month from August 2002 through September 2004, Roswell added significant numbers (468) of townhouse units in various locations. The most extensive area for new townhouse development in Roswell during that time period was within the "Parkway Village" (SR 92/ Crossville Road) corridor. Other significant areas of new townhouse development included the Crabapple area (Houze and Rucker roads), the old Roswell High School site ("Liberty") on SR 9 in the Historic District, a new complex north of Holcomb Bridge Road near Scott Road, and along the east side of South Atlanta Street.

Public and Institutional Development

As an urban area experiences growth, it is usually residential development that is built first, followed by commercial development. Institutions, such as schools and churches, tend to lag behind rapid residential development, then play "catch up." That trend appears to be the case in Roswell during 2000-2004, when new public schools (including the complex at Elkins Road and Hembree Road) were constructed. Two substantial private schools were also constructed in west-central Roswell (south of Crossville Road and along Woodstock Road). A senior living complex was also constructed at SR 120 and Willeo Road during this time period. Roswell also expanded its public facilities in the Maxwell Road and Hembree Road area, where it constructed new office facilities and a burn building for the Fire Department.

¹ See Chapter 4, Redevelopment Element, for a capsule summary of redevelopment that occurred within Roswell in recent years.

Office, Commercial and Business Park Development

Office, commercial, and light industrial development slowed but still continued. The primary reason for the slower pace of nonresidential (and noninstitutional) development during this time period was the increasing scarcity of land, although market downturns also played a role. Nearly all of the remaining vacant, light industrially zoned land (primarily along Old Roswell Road and at the end of Old Ellis Road) developed during this time period. Office development continued in some scattered locations, including within the Holcomb Woods Business Park, south of Holcomb Bridge Road along the east side of the Old Alabama Road extension, and along the north side of Mansell Road near Old Roswell Road. The conversion of single-family residences fronting on Crossville Road to office use (i.e., “small tract” development) is another significant land use trend during this time period.

Commercial development also slowed, but a few significant commercial areas were added during the 2000-2004 time period. Those areas experiencing new commercial development include Ellard shopping center east of GA 400, a new Kroger shopping center at Mansell Road extension (just north of Crossville Road), parcels at the intersection of Rucker Road and Houze Road, and centers in the Parkway Village corridor at SR 92 and Woodstock Road.

Additions of City Park Land

During this time period, the City passed a bond referendum to purchase park land. As a result, Roswell added extensive park lands, including passive open space at Big Creek east of Georgia 400 and west of Old Alabama Road, Leita Thompson Memorial Park (north of Crossville Road near Mountain Park Road), an addition to East Roswell Park, and a new park at the Chattahoochee River at the city limits-Gwinnett County line.

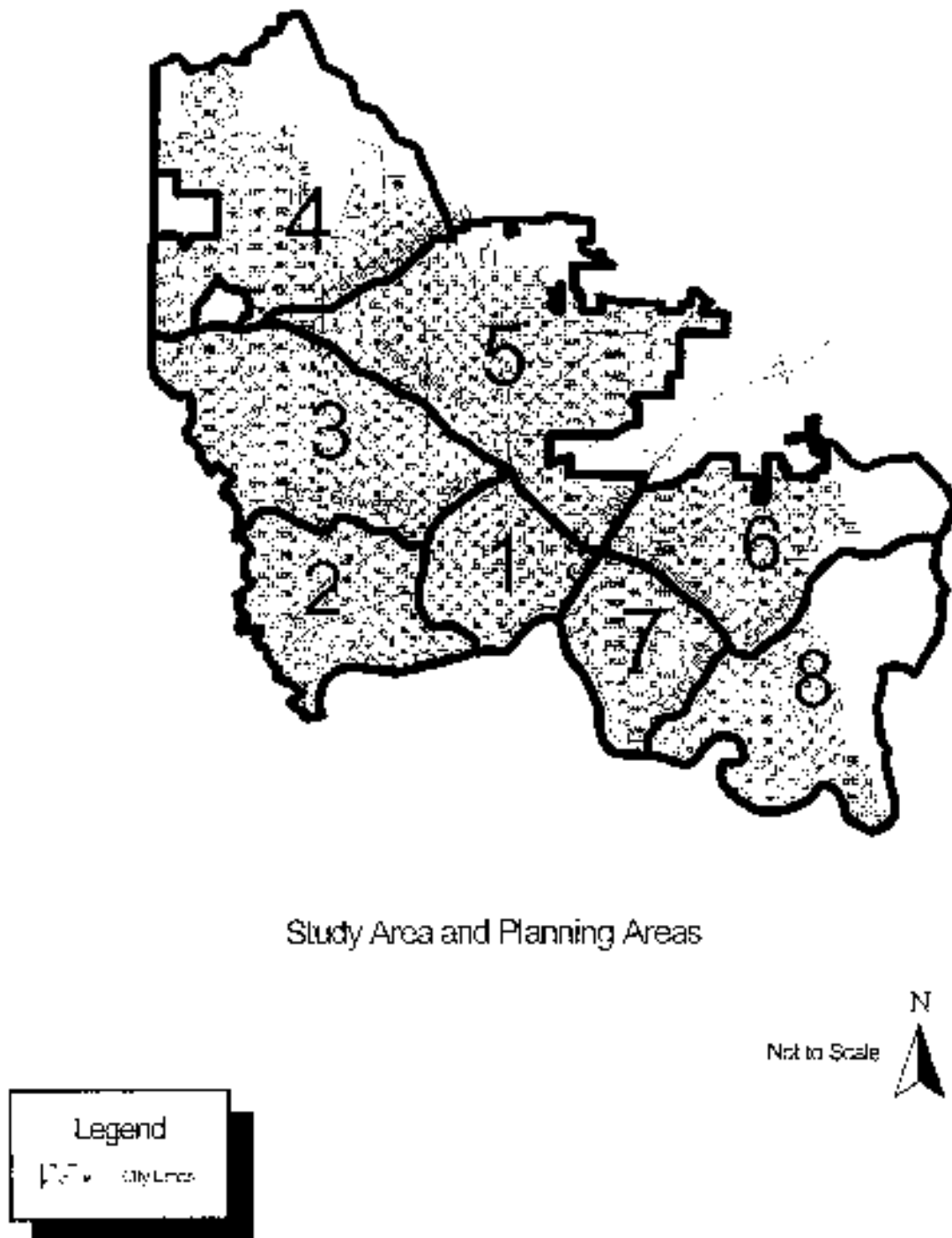
EXISTING LAND USE BY PLANNING AREA

The 2020 Comprehensive Plan presented existing land use by eight “planning areas” which also included nearby unincorporated lands north and northeast of the City (see Map 9.1). The findings in the 2020 Plan relative to these planning areas provide useful assessments and are therefore retained in this section. However, acreages by planning area are not presented in the 2025 Plan update. Descriptions of existing land use have been updated where appropriate.

Planning Area 1: Central Roswell

Planning Area 1 encompasses the oldest portions of the City, including the eastern portion of the historic city center. The area runs from the Chattahoochee River on the south to Holcomb Bridge Road on the north, between South Atlanta Street and Alpharetta Street on the west to GA 400 on the east. The least amount of undeveloped land is located in this planning area, while the City’s few deteriorating residential neighborhoods are located in the older portions of the area.

This area reflects one of the more vibrant parts of the City in terms of its mixture of uses, traditional neighborhood patterns, ongoing redevelopment activity and intensity, and range of recreational opportunities. For all its variety, incompatibility of land use is not a serious problem in this area of the City.



Map 9.1
Planning Areas, 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Several parts of the area have experienced a transition to other uses. Some single-family residential streets that lie behind and parallel to Holcomb Bridge Road (and its intense commercial activity) have redeveloped as offices, and small office developments have appeared on Grimes Bridge Road from the old post office site to established single-family neighborhoods. What was an older neighborhood to the south of City Hall is likely in the future to transition to office uses or low-density multi-family housing. This trend may move into the older neighborhood to the east of City Hall. Several low-density multi-family developments exist along Norcross Street east of City Hall to the Hog Wallow Creek Bridge (which establishes a point of transition to the single-family neighborhoods to the east). To the north of City Hall, the former Roswell High School site was converted into condominiums, while new housing also developed on a former concrete plant site off South Atlanta Street overlooking the National Recreation Area.

Infill development has occurred along South Atlanta Street, including multi-family development overlooking the National Recreation Area. Infill development is also expected for properties east of City Hall. Protection of the City's historic resources will continue to be a prime concern in this planning area.

The Natural Resources Element (Chapter 5) discusses many areas that require special consideration in future land use planning and development activities. The City's water supply intake on Big Creek at Oxbo Road is located within this planning area. The restrictions that apply within the water supply watershed therefore apply to most of the planning area, including stream buffer and setback requirements and impervious surface limitations. The southern portion of the planning area is also located within the 2,000-foot wide Chattahoochee River Corridor and subject to intensity limitations on land disturbance and impervious surface. Flood plains, wetlands and steep slopes are also among the issues that the City has addressed through its citywide environmental strategies and established goals and policies.

Planning Area 2: Southwest Roswell

Planning Area 2 was one of the earliest areas to come under "suburbanization" within the City in the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with portions of Planning Areas 1 and 3. The planning area fronts along the Chattahoochee River between the Cobb County line and Atlanta Street, and extends northerly to Pine Grove Road/Magnolia Street. A small portion of the planning area along the Chattahoochee River is not located within the city limits; this unincorporated area primarily includes a portion of the Chattahoochee Nature Center as well as parklands and recreation areas along the river.

Like most of the City, overall development patterns are well-established in Planning Area 2, and water and sewer infrastructure is adequate to support anticipated development. Some transition of land uses has occurred along South Atlanta Street at such side streets as Bannister Drive, Church Street and Jones Drive. Many small, aging houses have been fixed up and converted to commercial use. Because of the traffic impact of South Atlanta Street and relatively poor accessibility to adjoining properties, this trend is expected to continue and should help maintain economic vitality in the area. From 2000 to 2004, single-family residential subdivisions infilled approximately half of the vacant land (as of 1999) in this planning area.

The Garrison Hill District Design Guidelines apply to the Marietta Highway (SR 120) corridor, which traverses the planning area in an east-west direction. Infill along the remainder of the

Marietta Highway corridor will be given careful attention under the requirements of the Garrison Hill District Design Guidelines.

The southern portion of the planning area is located within the 2,000-foot wide Chattahoochee River Corridor and subject to intensity limitations on land disturbance and impervious surface. Flood plains, wetlands and steep slopes are also among the issues that the City has addressed through its citywide environmental strategies and the goals and policies established in the Natural Resources Element.

Planning Area 3: West Central Roswell

This planning area spans the central part of Roswell from Cobb County to Alpharetta Street between Pine Grove Road/Magnolia Street on the south and Woodstock Road/Crossville Road (SR 92) on the north. The character of Planning Area 3 changes from new homes on estate lots to the brick walks and gaslights of historic Canton Street. This planning area is predominantly residential, and it is almost exclusively single-family residential.

Limited vacant land area remains. Between 2000 and 2004, many of the vacant lands as of 1999 developed as single-family subdivisions and some larger lots were built upon for detached dwellings. Townhouse development within the Parkway Village (SR 92) corridor (the south side is in this planning area) was a significant development trend from 2002 through 2004.

The City's local historic district (and Historic District Design Guidelines) extends into the eastern portion of Planning Area 3, encompassing the small but vital Canton Street area from Magnolia Street to Woodstock Road. The Midtown Roswell Design Guidelines also apply to properties in Planning Area 3 (the west side of Alpharetta Street). The Parkway Village District has design guidelines applicable to development in Crossville Road (SR 92) corridor (the south side of the corridor).

Crossville Road (SR 92) is one of the busiest road segments in North Fulton County. The route runs from I-575 in southern Cherokee County to GA 400 in Roswell, continuing on to I-85 in Gwinnett County, and I-20 in DeKalb County. The massive flow of traffic that is primarily passing through Roswell has helped support recent commercial development to Planning Area 3 at three distinct locations along the highway—Hardscrabble Road, King Road and Crabapple Road.

The triangle between Alpharetta Street (SR 9), Crossville Road (SR 92) and Canton Street/Crabapple Road is likely to witness transitions of land use during the planning horizon. The south side of Crossville Road near SR 9 (the northern segment of the triangle) still has infill development potential; individual properties fronting along the south side of Crossville Road were impacted by the expansion of this highway to a multi-lane, divided facility. Houses on lots that are relatively shallow have converted and will continue to convert to low-intensity office use in accordance with the small-tract provisions of the Parkway Village Overlay Zoning District. There are a limited number of deeper lots which may have redevelopment potential for medium density residential use under Parkway Village Zoning and Design Guidelines.

Also in this triangle, there are 1950s-era subdivision lots and houses that should continue to remain viable residential neighborhoods. However, they are also potentially threatened by land use transitions. For instance, at SR 9 and Strickland Road, commercial uses have “turned the corner” and front exclusively on the residential street. A neighborhood plan could also help define objectives for managing transitions of land use in this triangle, in particular, the effects of

commercial land use encroaching into stable neighborhoods. Single-family neighborhoods in this area would be appropriate for neighborhood plans, particularly since they abut the Midtown Roswell redevelopment corridor and could be impacted (positively or negatively) as redevelopment occurs. A specific objective of the Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan is to integrate and connect these neighborhoods with the corridor, at least in terms of pedestrian access.

Due to the single-family residential homogeneity of Planning Area 3 west of Crabapple Road, there is little concern about incompatible land use relationships. Retail and service centers along Crossville Road (SR 92) present the potential for incompatibility, but so far potential impacts have been mitigated through Parkway Village District Overlay Zoning and Design Guidelines.

Planning Area 4: Northwest Roswell

Planning Area 4 extends north of Crossville Road (SR 92), abuts the Cobb County and Cherokee County lines, includes Hardscrabble Road, and reaches Arnold Mill Road (SR 140) to the east. Few undeveloped parcels remain in this planning area. Like Planning Area 3, the area is solidly single-family residential. The planning area is not well-served by sanitary sewer since it is in the Little River basin. The Little River Water Reclamation Plant is currently at capacity and is unlikely to be expanded or diverted. Several developments in the area were provided sanitary sewer service while the plant had remaining capacity, but this is no longer the case. Future development in the Little River basin will therefore most likely have to be on septic tanks.

There are no areas in Planning Area 4 where existing uses are transitioning to other uses through redevelopment, conversion or displacement. The potential for land use transitions, however, exists along portions of Hardscrabble Road, particularly those subdivision lots fronting Hardscrabble Road between the commercial shopping (at SR 92) and Roswell High School at King Road. These areas might receive pressure to transition to nonresidential use. This potential would be heightened if the lots across Hardscrabble Road (in Planning Area 5) were allowed to redevelop for nonresidential uses.

Planning Area 4 surrounds the City of Mountain Park. In Mountain Park, there is Garrett Lake. The lake is topographically positioned to receive erosion runoff from development projects in Roswell, particularly since the area has relatively steep slopes. Development plan reviews in the area should be given close scrutiny for appropriate erosion control measures.

Planning Area 5: North Central Roswell

Planning Area 5 ranges widely from exclusive single-family neighborhoods to the Alpharetta Highway strip to the City's primary industrial area (i.e., employment district). Planning Area 5 is bounded by Hardscrabble Road on the northwest, Crossville Road (SR 92) and Holcomb Bridge Road (SR 140) from Hardscrabble to GA 400 on the south, and the City of Alpharetta on the north and east. Major north-south roads in the planning area are Alpharetta Highway (SR 9), Houze Road (SR 140), and Crabapple Road north of Crossville Road (SR 92). The planning area includes the north side of Mansell Road west of SR 9 (the south side is within the city limits of Alpharetta). There is not much undeveloped property in the planning area.

The southernmost part of the planning area (i.e., the north side of the SR 92 corridor) is covered by the Parkway Village Overlay Zoning and Design Guidelines. Properties along the north side of the SR 92 corridor are likely to experience the same land use challenges as the south side of

the SR 92 corridor (discussed under Planning Area 3). The corridor still has some infill development potential. Houses on lots that are relatively shallow have converted and will continue to convert to low-intensity office use in accordance with the small-lot provisions of the Parkway Village Overlay Zoning District. Deeper and larger lots may have redevelopment potential for medium density residential use under Parkway Village Zoning and Design Guidelines.

Planning Area 5 includes the Roswell Town Center activity node. Along Alpharetta Highway (SR 9), there is a continuous strip of commercial and office uses up to North Fulton Regional Hospital, before continuing into Alpharetta. Commercial, office, and townhouse development has occurred along the north side of Mansell Road east of Alpharetta Highway, and also at Mansell Road Extension and Crossville Road (SR 92). Commercial development during the past five years along Mansell Road has included shopping centers, big box retail (the relocation of Wal-Mart from Holcomb Bridge Road to Mansell Road), automobile sales establishments, and multi-story office buildings. There is still some commercial development expected because of undeveloped commercially zoned properties in this corridor, as well as some redevelopment. Note in particular the southwest and southeast corners of Mansell Road and Alpharetta Highway (SR 9), both of which experienced redevelopment from 2002 to 2005.

Within the far western point of Planning Area 5, along Crossville Road (SR 92), Hardscrabble Road and King Road, there may be pressure for expansion of commercial use (see also prior discussion under Planning Area 4). The activity center in the area of Hardscrabble Road, Crabapple Road, Houze Road, and Arnold Mill Road has developed further between 2000 and 2004 and continues to develop commercially. There has also been some multi-family development in or near this activity center.

Planning Area 6: Northeast Roswell

Planning Area 6 covers the area east of GA 400 and north of Holcomb Bridge Road (SR 140) to Scott Road on the east. Old Alabama Road divides the planning area into northern and southern halves. The planning area includes high intensity commercial and office uses at GA 400 (including the Kimberly Clark regional headquarters campus) and shopping centers along the north side of Holcomb Bridge Road. A shopping center on Holcomb Bridge Road at Scott Road anchors an area that still has undeveloped land with nonresidential development probability. Most of these properties were zoned by Fulton County prior to their annexation in 1999. Several multi-family complexes exist in the planning area, such as Belcourt and Calibre Creek (now Archstone). Major single-family developments include Spring Ridge, Terramont, Weatherburne, Northpoint Oaks, Nesbit Lakes and the planned community of Willow Springs.

The extensive wetlands along Big Creek, running from GA 400 north of the Belcourt development toward Mansell Road, are an important and sensitive resource within this planning area. The City's purchase of park land in this area has helped to mitigate much of the development impacts that might have otherwise occurred, but there is still a privately owned tract containing most of the wetlands along Big Creek east of GA 400.

Planning Area 7: East Central Roswell

This planning area is bounded on the west by GA 400, on the north by Holcomb Bridge Road (SR 140), on the east by Eves Road, and on the south by the Chattahoochee River. It includes commercial and multi-family development along GA 400, the Martin's Landing planned

community, the Northcliff subdivision off Riverside Road, and several single-family subdivisions along Eves Road, including Woodfield and River Terrace.

Commercial uses along Holcomb Bridge Road are effectively separated from (but, on the other hand, not connected with), the area's multi-family complexes and single-family subdivisions. Some of the land remains undeveloped, much of which lies along Old Alabama Road between Riverside Road and The Plaza at Roswell shopping center on Holcomb Bridge Road, and along Holcomb Bridge Road west of Eves Road. Multi-story office development may present some incompatibility with the Martin's Landing subdivision.

The southern portion of Planning Area 7 is located within the 2,000-foot wide Chattahoochee River Corridor and subject to intensity limitations on land disturbance and impervious surface.

Planning Area 8: East Roswell

Planning Area 8 includes much of the area annexed into the City in 1999, known as the eastside annexation. The planning area is bounded on the south by the Chattahoochee River, Gwinnett County and the Chattahoochee River to the east, and Eves Road and Scott Road on the west. Holcomb Bridge Road splits the planning area into northern and southern portions, though there is not much land north of Holcomb Bridge Road and east of Scott Road that is within the Roswell city limits. The planning area extends to the west side of Nesbit Ferry Road and follows Holcomb Bridge Road.

The planning area is predominantly residential, with the exception of properties along Holcomb Bridge Road (SR 140) (including a commercial node at Holcomb Bridge Road and Nesbit Ferry Road). The planned community of Horseshoe Bend is the largest residential development in the planning area. Other high-end single-family subdivisions and medium-density residential developments exist along Eves Road, such as Sentinel on the River and Riverfalls. There is extensive apartment development on the north side of Holcomb Bridge Road in this planning area, including Champions Green and Tree Ridge complexes.

Some new development potential exists within the Holcomb Bridge Road corridor. A few vacant lots that front on Holcomb Bridge Road (SR 140) and single family residences that front on Old Scott Road are likely to witness pressure to transition into office uses, possibly through land assembly and redevelopment. The southern portion of Planning Area 8 is located within the 2,000-foot wide Chattahoochee River Corridor and subject to intensity limitations on land disturbance and impervious surface. A large parcel on Holcomb Bridge Road between Eves Road and Fouts Road was acquired by the City for expansion of the East Roswell Park, and tracts at the Fulton County-Gwinnett County line, south of Holcomb Bridge Road, have been acquired for greenspace and the Fulton County Environmental Campus.

EXISTING LAND USE – 2004

Table 9.8
Existing Land Use in Roswell 1999 and 2004
and Land Use Change, 1999-2004
City of Roswell

Land Use Category	Roswell 1999		Roswell 2004		Net Change, 1999-2004, Acres
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	
Single-Family Residential	12,178.5	49.6%	13,131.0	53%	952.5
Multi-Family Residential	1,245.3	5.1%	1,738.9	7%	493.6
<i>Subtotal - Residential</i>	<i>13,423.8</i>	<i>54.7%</i>	<i>14,869.9</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>1,446.1</i>
Office/ Professional	398.1	1.6%	689.3	2.7%	291.2
Commercial	903.5	3.7%	1,136.8	4.5%	233.3
<i>Subtotal – Commercial</i>	<i>1,301.7</i>	<i>5.3%</i>	<i>1,826.1</i>	<i>7.2%</i>	<i>524.4</i>
Industrial	408.6	1.7%	381.3	1.5%	-27.3
Public/ Institutional	966.4	3.9%	1,348.1	5.3%	381.7
Park/ Rec./ Conservation	1,340.7	5.5%	1,874.8	7.4%	534.1
Trans/ Comm/ Utilities	120.0	0.5%	118.7	0.4%	-1.3
Roads	2,448.1	10.0%	2,645.15	10.5%	197.05
Water	572.6	2.3%	565.6	2.2%	-7.0
Vacant Land	3,971.6	16.2%	1,647.71	6.5%	-2,323.89
Total	24,553.5	100.0%	25,277.36	100.0%	723.86

Source: 1999 data from Cooper-Ross in 2020 Comprehensive Plan. 2004 data provided by Roswell Community Development Department based on information supplied by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF LAND USE

Infill and redevelopment potential, prospects for incompatible land uses, and service by infrastructure are summarized for each planning area in Table 9.9.

Table 9.9
Land Use Issues by Planning Area

Character Area	1 Central	2 SW	3 West Central	4 NW	5 North Central	6 NE	7 East Central	8 East
Infill and Redevelopment								
Residential Infill Potential				♦				
Commercial Infill Potential	♦						♦	
Blighted Areas/Deterioration								
Redevelopment	♦				♦			
Land Use Conflicts								
Incompatibilities Identified						♦	♦	
Neighborhood Plan Priorities	♦							
Transitions in Land Use	♦		♦		♦			
Infrastructure								
Highway Traffic Congestion	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦	♦
Water and Sewer Limitations				♦				
Limited Proximity to Parks								

♦ Significant
Minor significance

Historic Factors Leading to Current Development Patterns

Historic factors that have led to Roswell's land use patterns include decentralization of the regional development pattern, fast-paced suburban residential development, sewer availability, and transportation improvements, especially Georgia 400. A marked trend in Roswell's land use history has been large-scale private development of communities with golf courses, such as Horseshoe Bend, Brookfield West, and Willow Springs, all of which were developed in unincorporated Fulton County and annexed into the City limits. Roswell's well-admired park system and proximity to the Chattahoochee River have also contributed to its historic development patterns. Other historic factors influencing Roswell's land use patterns are described in detail in an earlier section of this element.

Patterns and Densities Related to Infrastructure

Roswell is generally well served with all infrastructure facilities. There are no areas where rapid development threatens to outpace infrastructure capacity, with a few exceptions. The Fulton County School System has historically had a difficult time keeping up with residential development in North Fulton County, but new schools have been built in the area in recent years. Secondly, the lack of sanitary sewer capacity in the Little River basin (see discussion of Planning Area 4) has not limited development but has reduced some residential densities since newer development in that area has been served by individual septic tanks. Third, the arterial

road system is generally at capacity, which might begin to limit future development in Roswell if it was not already reaching buildout, as it is today. Over time, the City through its land use policies and regulations has reduced its permitted residential densities from 14 units per acre to 10 units per acre, then down to 8 units per acre, then down to 5 units per acre in an effort to reduce congestion (schools and roads) and ensure greater compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Roswell's commercial uses follow a "strip" pattern along certain arterial streets, such as Alpharetta Highway and Holcomb Bridge Road. In other areas, however, such as Marietta Highway (SR 120) and Crossville Road (SR 92), Roswell has succeeded in directing commercial development into neighborhood shopping villages rather than forming continuous commercial strips. Success in avoiding strip commercialization in these two corridors is attributed to several things, including: a land use plan that guided nodal development, neighborhood and communitywide activism, a City Council willing to adopt sound planning principles, and preparation and implementation of design guidelines (Garrison Hill and Parkway Village, respectively) that help further define community desires for development. In particular, the Parkway Village Overlay District provides a mechanism for commercial development, but only on the community's desired terms. That district also allows owners of dwellings to convert to office-professional and other allowed uses through a "small tract" development process.

Transitional and Blighted Areas

The preceding discussion of land use by planning area highlights areas of transitional land uses (also see Table 9.8). Properties east of City Hall and fringe neighborhoods west of South Atlanta Street may experience a transition from residential to nonresidential uses. Roswell has managed its transitional land use areas well through zoning and overlay districts, including buffering and intensity step-downs between incompatible uses. By and large, Roswell has limited blighted areas and they may require rehabilitation. One such area is the Midtown Roswell redevelopment corridor, which is not blighted but the City has been proactive in encouraging redevelopment there before physical and aesthetic conditions degrade below community standards. The City's industrial areas are mostly modern-day business parks and there are no signs of decline or obsolescence.

With regard to residential development, with the exception of lot-by-lot conversions of dwellings along Crossville Road in the Parkway Village Overlay Zoning District, most of the concerns about transitional neighborhoods relate to Central Roswell (Planning Area 1). The City's Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for neighborhood planning (see Chapter 7) which may provide a useful mechanism for addressing neighborhoods with older, smaller homes that no longer fit the needs and tastes of most households desiring to live in Roswell. In the Urban Design Element (Chapter 8), and in the following section of this chapter, there is discussion of "character areas," one of which is the City's older, intown neighborhoods. Those areas are prime candidates for neighborhood plans to assess needs and identify rehabilitation and redevelopment opportunities.

Infill Development Potential

The existing land use map indicates the most significant vacant lands. The preceding discussion of planning areas has highlighted the potential for infill development (see also Table 9.8 for a summary). Roswell is clearly running out of vacant land within the city limits. As already noted, some of the remaining undeveloped tracts cannot be developed because they are mostly water. Others have poor access (and in some cases appear to be landlocked, or

without their own direct frontage on a street). Yet others are difficult to develop, due to slope (especially along the Chattahoochee River).

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Sensitive areas include the Chattahoochee River Corridor, flood plains, wetlands, and steep slopes. Roswell has put in place the regulations needed to protect sensitive areas, and in other cases it has acquired land with environmental protection in mind. Regulations include Metropolitan River Protection Act review, and zoning regulations that regulate wetlands and prevent development in flood plains. The policies of the Natural Resources Element address steep slopes, and the City addresses those policies through the preliminary platting process (in the case of subdivision approvals) and the design review process (in cases of development approval).

Sites of Historic or Archaeological Interest

As noted in the Historic Resources Element (Chapter 6 of this Comprehensive Plan), Roswell has a local historic district that protects its most valuable historic resources. The City's Zoning Ordinance, revamped in 2003, also extended the Historic Preservation Commission's jurisdiction to archaeological sites.

Single-Use and Multi-Use Districts

Roswell's first Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1971, put the City on a course of single-function land use districts. Roswell's current Zoning Ordinance, though modified, still preserves single-function districts, and such single-use districts are still considered essential to protecting the character and value of Roswell's many fine residential neighborhoods. Where the community has accepted multiple uses and mixed use development, however, mixtures of land uses are permitted. Mixed-use districts include the local historic district, the Parkway Village Overlay District, and the Midtown Roswell Overlay District.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Traditional neighborhoods have dwellings with little to no setback from the street and often are accessed with alleys. Generally, most of Roswell's conventional suburbs are unlike traditional neighborhoods. However, Roswell does have certain neighborhoods within the local historic district that have features of traditional neighborhood development. During the process of revising its Zoning Ordinance, Roswell considered but decided not to establish a separate zoning district for traditional neighborhood development. However, it reestablished a residential planned unit development district that permits innovative site arrangements and allows for designs that follow principles of traditional neighborhood development. Roswell has also encouraged this style of development within the Midtown Roswell redevelopment corridor (see especially the Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan and accompanying overlay district).

Transit-Oriented Development

Roswell is not served by a MARTA heavy rail line. It does have bus routes (see the Transportation Element), and certain land use regulations and policies encourage better connections to public sidewalks in commercial developments, in order to better serve transit riders. The Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan envisions more transit-friendly development.

There are no significant opportunities, however, to promote more compact development around transit stations since there are none in Roswell.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Having 1.5 jobs for each housing unit is considered a good balance of residential and nonresidential development. As of 2004, the best estimate is that Roswell has 33,691 housing units (see Table 2.4, Chapter 2 of this Comprehensive Plan). Employment is estimated at approximately 40,000 (see Chapter 3). This equates to an approximate jobs-to-housing units ratio of 1.19 in the year 2004. This number is slightly lower than the range recommended in the planning literature, which is 1.3:1 to 1.7:1. However, this is not surprising given that Roswell developed historically as a bedroom community. Somewhat surprisingly the City's mix of jobs to housing has equalized substantially over time; hence, this numerical finding does not cause concern.

As noted in the planning literature on this subject, however, one should use quantifiable jobs-housing balance benchmarks with caution, since one simple numerical benchmark does not adequately reflect whether quantitative balances of jobs and housing exist.² Specific policies for jobs-housing balance are not considered necessary in Roswell's Comprehensive Plan. For more information, see the City's Economic Development Strategy (Chapter 3), which calls for diversification of the employment base, and the Housing Element (Chapter 2), which addresses housing needs.

LAND CAPACITY AND PROJECTION OF LAND USE NEEDS

As a part of the 2020 planning process, Roswell prepared a Demand and Capacity Analysis, which is a technical study that quantifies the amount of growth that is expected in the larger area, including Roswell, and compares that future "demand" for land to the land resources in the Roswell Study Area. The land resources themselves are constrained to those acres actually having development potential, and to the type and intensity of development that would be appropriate. Thus, the "capacity" of Roswell to accommodate future growth can be clearly defined within a land use planning framework.

As of 1999, the study found that there were only 4,544 acres of undeveloped lands, of which 3,421 were found to have development potential. Based on the expected land use (and attendant zoning classification) of each property, a density factor was applied to the net developable land to estimate the amount of development that the property was expected to be capable of accommodating. Density factors are: 1) the number of dwelling units per acre for residential uses and 2) square footage of floor area per acre for office, commercial and industrial uses. The density factors were based on the City's zoning requirements under the various zoning district categories. For more information on the densities and intensities utilized in that study, please contact the Community Development Department.

A key finding of the analysis was that, because demand for housing was expected to outstrip supply in Roswell, it was assumed that all of the land anticipated for future residential development in Roswell would be built out prior to 2020. Thus, the additional units, for which there was development capacity, established the 2020 forecast for residential land use.

² Weitz, Jerry, 2003. *Jobs-Housing Balance*. Planning Advisory Service Report Number 516. Chicago: American Planning Association.

Such a study was not repeated for the 2025 Plan update. It is instructive to note that, given Roswell's almost built-out state, projections of population and nonresidential growth were themselves constrained by the availability of land. That is, Roswell's population and employment projections were determined based on the physical ability of the City to accommodate new growth and development (and some redevelopment), as opposed to forecasting or projecting population that might occur if there was an unlimited land supply. Hence, Roswell's 2025 Land Use Plan is based more on land capacity limitations rather than land use needs.

As to other than residential or commercial land use needs, the City has recently purchased additional tracts of park land in anticipation of future needs. It has also quantified its parks and recreation needs for purposes of continuing to charge impact fees (see the development impact fee methods report in this Comprehensive Plan).

CHARACTER AREAS AND OVERALL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT MAP

The notion of character areas is introduced in the optional Urban Design Element (see Chapter 8). Table 9.10 provides a summary of major character areas by planning area. The boundaries of the 2020 planning areas, which conform primarily to census tracts, usually follow major roads, such as Georgia 400, Crossville Road and Alpharetta Highway.

Table 9.10
Character Area by Planning Area

Character Area	1 Central	2 SW	3 West Central	4 NW	5 North Central	6 NE	7 East Central	8 East
Centers								
Historic District	♦	♦	♦					
400/Holcomb Bridge	♦				♦	♦	♦	
Crabapple/Houze				♦	♦			
Corridors								
Chattahoochee River	♦	♦					♦	♦
Parkway Village			♦	♦	♦			
Midtown Roswell	♦		♦		♦			
Garrison Hill		♦						
Holcomb Bridge Road						♦	♦	
Districts								
Employment					♦			
Preserves								
Big Creek Unit (NRA)	♦							
Big Creek Passive Park						♦		
Leita Thompson Park				♦				
Neighborhoods								
Intown Settlements	♦							
Master Planned Communities				♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Conventional Suburbs	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Rural Development			♦	♦				

As Table 9.10 makes apparent, a discussion of character areas (see Chapter 8 of this Comprehensive Plan) tends to include land uses along both sides of highways and centers that

straddle more than one planning area. Hence, Table 9.8 makes the case why further description by planning area (like that used in the 2020 Plan) is no longer most instructive. While the preceding discussion of existing land use and land use trends is useful, description of land use aspirations requires a different geography. The character areas are better suited as an organizing tool for describing future land use aspirations.

The character area approach helps to conceptualize areas that may need to be redeveloped (such as the Midtown Roswell redevelopment corridor). It also helps to designate priorities for preparing area plans, such as the neighborhood plans recommended for one or more of Roswell's intown (original settlement) neighborhoods. By formally establishing corridors in the character area typology, Roswell's land use plan is more in keeping with regional plan policies and state recommendations for growth planning.

By and large, the measures that are needed to implement the character areas are already in place, summarized as follows:

- In terms of promoting overall design, a number of design guidelines already exist (see Chapter 8), and indeed the character areas shown on the overall development concepts map are a reflection of prior work by the City in maintaining and promoting unique character areas of the City such as the local historic district, Parkway Village, Midtown Roswell, and the Garrison Hill corridor.
- Two of these development corridors, Parkway Village and Midtown Roswell, have zoning overlays that allow for mixed and/or multiple uses. Another study is underway to define character and redevelopment prospects in the Holcomb Bridge Road corridor east of Georgia 400.
- The City's long-standing Design Review Board is charged with ensuring that new development fits intended character and land use compatibility.
- The Chattahoochee River corridor is protected pursuant to state law adopted in 1973, a regional plan for the corridor (see the Chapter 5, Natural Resources Element) and local reviews conducted under authority of that law.
- Preserves are protected through municipal ownership.
- The rural development character area is implemented primarily through the City's two-acre minimum zoning district.
- The local historic district has its own set of overlay regulations in Roswell's Zoning Ordinance. Refinement of the local historic district (called a center in the character area typology) is underway, and the Historic Resources Element (Chapter 6) further defines that center in terms of three "historic character areas."
- The Georgia 400/SR 9 "Town Center" was planned for redevelopment as a part of the Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan.
- Other character areas, such as master planned communities, conventional suburbs, and the employment district, do not require special implementation measures above and beyond the City's current (conventional) zoning district regulations.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES

Although Roswell has elected to include an overall development concepts map, which delineates character areas for purposes of urban design and land use, its future land use plan map remains central to decision making.

The future land use plan map illustrates the preferred location of probable growth in Roswell over the next 20 years. As noted previously, extensive development of many vacant tracts has continued to occur during 2000-2004, and very little developable land will still be vacant in the City by the year 2020.

The future land use plan map for the year 2025 is not materially different than the 2020 plan map, as amended by the City. There are, however, some minor changes from the 2020 plan map, as amended, in order to bring into consistency certain properties that have developed differently from the Plan's recommendations.

The following land use categories are shown on the future land use plan map.

Estate Residential: Single-family residences developed on separate lots, and often developed in subdivisions, having a density of ½ dwelling unit per acre (that is, lot sizes of at least two acres). The E-1 zoning district is consistent with this land use designation.

Low-Density Residential: Single-family residences developed on separate lots, and often developed in subdivisions, having a density of 1 to 1½ dwelling units per acre. The E-2 zoning district is consistent with this land use designation.

Suburban Residential: Single-family residences developed on separate lots, and often developed in subdivisions, having a density of 2 to 2½ dwelling units per acre. The R-1 zoning district is consistent with this land use designation.

Medium-Density Residential: Single-family residences developed on separate lots, and often developed in subdivisions, having a density of three to five dwelling units per acre. The R-2 zoning district and the R-5 zoning district are consistent with this land use designation. In some cases, attached dwelling units (e.g., townhouses and duplexes) can be constructed at medium densities.

High-Density Residential: Multi-family dwellings such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments, developed at densities not to exceed five dwelling units per acre. The R-3 and R-TH zoning districts are consistent with this land use designation, depending on surrounding land use and zoning conditions, when limited to a maximum density of eight dwelling units per acre.

Office-Professional: Developments predominantly occupied by establishments that primarily provide a service as opposed to the sale of goods or merchandise, located in low intensity settings in one- or two-story buildings. Examples include medical or engineering offices, real

estate offices, retail print and copy centers, and insurance agencies. The O-P zoning district is consistent with this land use designation.

Office Campus: Developments predominantly occupied by establishments that primarily provide a service as opposed to the sale of goods or merchandise, located in high intensity settings in multi-story buildings. Examples include multiple-tenant office centers, mid-rise and high-rise office buildings, private hospitals and medical centers, mixed-use office and commercial multi-story buildings, and corporate headquarters. The OCMS zoning district can be consistent with this land use designation, depending on surrounding land use and zoning conditions.

Neighborhood Commercial: Commercial developments predominantly occupied by establishments that offer goods or merchandise for sale or rent to nearby residents. Such uses generally have floor areas no greater than 5,000 square feet and include such stores as convenience shopping facilities, personal service establishments, pharmacies, corner markets, and bakeries. The C-2 zoning district is consistent with this land use designation.

General Commercial: Commercial developments predominantly occupied by establishments that offer goods or merchandise for sale or rent to a broad shopping market. Such uses include stores, shopping centers, hotels, restaurants, gasoline stations, automobile body shops, and physical fitness centers, markets and building supply centers. The C-1 and C-3 zoning districts can be consistent with this land use designation, depending on surrounding land use and zoning conditions.

Light Industrial/Showroom/Wholesale: Land dedicated to warehousing, distribution or wholesale trade facilities as well as light assembly, repair or fabrication. The I-1 zoning district, which was reconfigured to support more office-showroom uses rather than warehouses and light industrial uses in the 2003 Zoning Ordinance, is consistent with this land use designation.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities: This category includes such uses as electric or gas substations, power generation plants, sewage treatment plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, streets and highways. These uses are appropriate in any zoning district where they are otherwise allowed.

Public-Institutional: State, federal or local government uses, and quasi-public institutions. Governmental uses include city hall, fire stations, libraries, post offices and public schools (but not parks). Institutional uses include churches, cemeteries, fraternal meeting halls, and other private non-profit uses that provide services to the public. These uses are generally appropriate in any zoning district where they are otherwise allowed. Churches, however, may or may not be appropriate in residential areas, depending on surrounding land use and zoning conditions.

Parks, Recreation and Conservation: Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses and public conservation of natural areas. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, etc. These uses are appropriate in any zoning district where they are otherwise allowed.

Agriculture and Forestry: Land being actively farmed, including crop cultivation or livestock operations, or set aside for commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting as an agricultural pursuit. There are no such uses in Roswell today, and none are expected to be initiated over the next 20 years.

FUTURE LAND USE ACREAGES AND LAND USE CHANGE

Table 9.11
Land Use Acreages 2025 and Projected Land Use Change
City of Roswell

Future Land Use Category	Existing Land Use, 2004		Future Land Use 2020 Plan		Future Land Use 2025 Plan		Projected Land Use Change, 2004 (existing) to 2025 (future)	Difference Between 2020 and 2025 Plans
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	Acres
Estate Residential	n/c	n/c	1,878.7	7.6	2,002.0	7.7	n/c	+124
Low-Density Residential	n/c	n/c	3,726.8	15.0	6,396.9	24.8	n/c	+2,670
Suburban Residential	n/c	n/c	3,726.8	15.0	4,089.9	15.8	n/c	+364
Medium-Density Residential	n/c	n/c	4,808.7	19.4	2,084.6	8.0	n/c	-2,724
High-Density Residential	n/c	n/c	1,376.2	5.6	1,431.3	5.5	n/c	55
Single-Family Residential	13,131.0	53	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	--
Multi-Family Residential	1,738.9	7	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	--
<i>Subtotal—Residential</i>	<i>14,869.9</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>15,551.6</i>	<i>62.7</i>	<i>16,004.7</i>	<i>62.0</i>	<i>+1,134.8</i>	<i>+453</i>
Office/Professional	689.3	2.7	488.4	2.0	472.9	1.8	n/c	+16
Office Campus	n/c	n/c	272.3	1.1	282.8	1.1	n/c	+11
<i>Subtotal—Office</i>	<i>689.3</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>760.7</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>755.7</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>+66.4</i>	<i>-5</i>
Neighborhood Commercial	n/c	n/c	89.2	0.4	72.8	0.2	n/c	-16
General Commercial	n/c	n/c	1,437.3	5.8	1,396.8	5.4	n/c	-41
Commercial (all)	1,136.8	4.5	1,526.5	6.2	1,469.6	5.7	+332.8	-56.9
<i>Subtotal—Commercial and Office Categories</i>	<i>1,826.1</i>	<i>7.2</i>	<i>2,287.2</i>	<i>9.2</i>	<i>2,225.3</i>	<i>8.6</i>	<i>+399.2</i>	<i>-61.9</i>
Light Ind./Show/Whole	381.3	1.5	575.8	2.3	551.8	2.1	+170.5	-24
Public/Institutional	1,348.1	5.3	1,160.6	4.7	1,225.0	4.7	-123.1	+64.4
Park/Rec./Conservation	1,874.8	7.4	1,789.7	7.2	2,069.4	8.0	+194.6	+279.7
Trans/Comm/Utilities	118.7	0.4	120.0	0.5	135.8	0.5	+17.1	+15.8
Roads	2,645.15	10.5	2,631.7	10.6	3,005.5	11.2	+360.35	+374
Water	565.6	2.2	669.4	2.7	565.6	2.1	0	-103.8
Vacant Land	1,647.71	6.5	0	0	5.86	0.002	-1,614.85	+6
Total	25,277.36	100.0	24,786.0	100.0	25,788.96	100.0	+511.6	+1,003

Source: Roswell Community Development Department, Acreages of Future Land Use Plan Map calculated by GIS, 2005.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE LAND USE PLAN

As noted at the outset of this chapter, the Land Use Element represents a culmination of the City's community vision, vision statements for subareas, and the goals, policies, strategies, and objectives of other Comprehensive Plan elements. Reiterating all of them would not be appropriate here. Rather, it is appropriate to focus on those principles that have not already been illuminated in the various plan elements. Such principles include but are not limited to consistency with the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Development Plan (RDP) policies, best land use practices, and the City's own guiding principles, policies and objectives.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RDP) POLICIES

This section of the Land Use Element describes 11 of 14 RDP policies and assesses the extent to which Roswell's Land Use Element is consistent with them.³

RDP Policy #1: Provide development strategies and infrastructure investments to accommodate forecasted population and employment growth more efficiently.

More efficient development is possible in certain instances in Roswell. Roswell strives to provide superior levels of service for community facilities and services so that continued development and redevelopment are likely, as opposed to displacing development into unincorporated areas of North Fulton County. Efficiencies are encouraged by providing for residential planned unit developments and encouraging revitalization within designated corridors, and maintaining development permissions within mixed-use and multi-use centers and corridors.

RDP Policy #2: Guide an increased share of new development to the Central Business District, transportation corridors, activity centers and town centers.

By adopting an overall development concept map with designated centers, corridors, districts, and other character areas, Roswell has re-conceptualized its development policies to be consistent with this RDP policy. Designated centers include the local historic district (historic center), the Town Center at SR 9 and Holcomb Bridge/Crossville Road, and the area surrounding the interchange of Georgia Highway 400 and Holcomb Bridge Road. Transportation corridors are also recognized in the overall development concept map, including the Midtown Roswell redevelopment corridor, Holcomb Bridge Road, Crossville Road (SR 92, also known as Parkway Village), and Marietta Highway (SR 120, also known as Garrison Hill). Because these centers and corridors have the greatest remaining development and redevelopment potential, Roswell's land use plan and overall development concept map are consistent with this RDP policy.

RDP Policy #3: Increase opportunities for mixed-use development, infill and redevelopment.

³ RDP policies 12, 13, and 14 relate to "coordination" and are therefore not discussed in this section. RDP policy #13, "Coordinate local policies and regulations to support the RDP," is addressed by virtue of including this section in the Comprehensive Plan.

Roswell has made great strides, however, to integrate additional opportunities for mixed-use development and redevelopment into its Comprehensive Plan. The local historic district provides for mixtures of land uses and has permitted such mixtures for some time now. The Parkway Village Overlay District (SR 92 corridor) permits commercial, office, and townhouses to be developed in close proximity to one another. The Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan and overlay district specifically provide for residential-office-civic-commercial mixed use developments.

Infill development has been occurring without additional specific policies, because the land values in Roswell (and its high quality of life) make continued development economically viable. Developing infill sites will become increasingly more challenging, however, as the sites remaining become scarcer, difficult to develop physically, and more challenging in terms of development approvals particularly where higher densities are involved.

RDP Policy #4: Increase transportation choices and transit-oriented development (TOD).

As noted earlier in this Land Use Element, Roswell is not served by heavy rail transit stations. It does have MARTA bus service, and transit-friendly development regulations have been instituted in Roswell's 2003 Zoning Ordinance. Nonetheless, there is little Roswell can do to implement transit-oriented development.

Roswell's multi-modal transportation plan (see Chapter 12 of the Comprehensive Plan) addresses several efforts to increase transportation choice, including the development of a citywide trails network, sidewalk improvements, bikeway planning, and integration of multi-modal objectives into more specific plans such as the Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan.

RDP Policy #5: Provide a variety of housing choices throughout the region.

This RDP policy is addressed in the Housing Element (Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan). The City's Housing Element includes an assessment of the types of housing units available and the forecasted needs of Roswell's future population. A wide variety of housing types are available (and diversification opportunities possible), including detached single-family dwellings, townhouses, apartments, condominiums, loft dwellings, and accessory apartments. Although a regional allocation of affordable housing units has not been proposed in the regional development plan, it appears that Roswell has its fair share of multi-family units.

RDP Policy #6: Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods.

This policy is especially important in Roswell, which is mostly a collection of suburban-style subdivisions. Most of Roswell's neighborhoods have high-value housing and are expected to remain stable throughout the planning horizon (2025). There are some neighborhoods, however, that may require special attention in order to remain stable. The combination of age (many units in these neighborhoods were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s), size (they are smaller than most households find suitable today), and transitions in terms of social demographics make these intown neighborhoods more susceptible to change, transition, and possibly decline. The neighborhoods designated as "intown settlement" on the overall development concepts map may require special attention in the future for these reasons. Neighborhood plans targeted at one or more of these intown neighborhoods are recommended, as they offer an opportunity for the City to ensure that these older settlements remain stable and are better connected with commercial redevelopment areas.

RDP Policy #7. Advance sustainable greenfield development.

This policy is increasingly irrelevant to Roswell as almost all of its vacant, fringe-area lands have already been developed and emphasis has shifted to infill sites and redevelopment. Nonetheless, Roswell's land use regulations provide for "conservation subdivisions" which provide opportunities for set-aside of green space which promotes a more sustainable suburban form. Roswell's Zoning Ordinance also provides for residential planned unit developments, which promote open space set-asides and more efficient development. In short, Roswell has done what it can do to implement this policy, considering its relevance to the City's future development policies is increasingly remote.

RDP Policy #8. Protect environmentally sensitive areas.

As described more fully in the Natural Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan, as well as earlier sections of this Land Use Element, Roswell has remained a leader regionally in terms of its natural resource protection. It has protected the Chattahoochee River corridor and enhanced it with multi-modal transportation and recreational opportunities. Its watersheds, wetlands, and flood plains are adequately protected. It has policies for protecting against inappropriate development on steep slopes which are enforced during a design review process.

RDP Policy #9. Create a regional network of greenspace that connects across jurisdictional boundaries.

Roswell adopted a greenspace plan (see the Natural Resources Element), when the Governor's greenspace program was initiated under then Governor Roy Barnes. In the past year (2004), the greenspace commission was in the process of being reinvented under Governor Perdue. The Chattahoochee River is the primary opportunity for linkage to the larger, regional open space network. By installing a multi-use trail along the river, purchasing additional land along the river (with the help of the Trust for Public Land), and taking over park lands previously managed by Fulton County, Roswell has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that the river corridor in the City provides attractive greenspace consistent with regional (and indeed, national, considering the Chattahoochee River National Recreational Area lands) greenspace objectives. The City has also expended funds to develop Oxbo Park, which runs between Oxbo Road and Big Creek in the central part of the City.

A key desire of the City is to link the Chattahoochee River greenway with the Big Creek Greenway developed in the adjacent City of Alpharetta. Such connections present practical challenges, as most if not all of the land along Big Creek between the Alpharetta city limits and Oxbo Park are developed. There are also substantial financial challenges as well to making that connection, even if it is determined physically possible to link the Oxbo Park (which connects or can connect to the Big Creek Unit National Recreation Area (shown as a "preserve" on the overall development concepts map) with Alpharetta's Big Creek Greenway.⁴

While not crossing into other jurisdictions, it is important to note that citizens participating in the City's visioning workshops strongly suggested that Roswell do more to connect its own park system together by bike lanes and sidewalks and/or multi-use trails. Hence, in addition to

⁴ As recently as December 30, 2004, Roswell Mayor Jere Wood was quoted that such a project (connecting to Alpharetta's Big Creek Greenway) is a worthy project but faces challenges. The Mayor invited citizens to speak up on projects that might be funded with a new bond referendum in 2006. See: "Saving by Borrowing," Atlanta Journal-Constitution, December 30, 2004, page JH3.

continuing to explore alternatives to connections with greenspace outside the City, Roswell desires to pursue connections of greenspaces and park lands within the City itself.

RDP Policy #10: Preserve existing rural character.

Roswell's suburbanization and maturing as a city has left fewer and fewer opportunities (or desires) to preserve rural character. One exception is a still-rural area in west-central Roswell, south of Crossville Road. That area has been designated as rural development on the overall development concepts map, and it is adequately implemented by the City's Zoning Ordinance through a two-acre lot minimum. No other areas are described in this plan as being appropriate for preservation as rural.

RDP Policy #11: Preserve historic resources.

As the Historic Preservation Element of this Comprehensive Plan makes clear (see Chapter 6), Roswell has been a regional leader in preserving its historic resources. The City clearly implements this regional development plan policy.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BEST LAND USE PRACTICES

The Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Development Plan Guidebook (2004) summarizes various quality growth tools that local governments can implement in their Comprehensive Plans, land use regulations, and development review processes. For each tool, the guidebook articulates "best policies" for land use, intergovernmental coordination, housing, and environment. Table 9.12 identifies, for each development-related and corridor planning tool, those best land use practices related to land use elements of comprehensive plans and provides notes on the extent to which they are implemented in Roswell. Generally, Roswell achieves 90-95% compliance with those best land use practices that pertain to tools consistent with the City's land use policies.

Table 9.12
Regional Development Plan “Best Land Use Practices”
and their Application in Roswell

Tool	Best Land Use Practice	Applicability in Roswell
Transit-oriented Development	Opportunities are assessed and identified	Complies although TOD opportunities are minimal in Roswell
Transit-oriented Development	Density bonuses for transit-supportive development are considered	The Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan offers higher densities for mixed-use redevelopment along a bus transit corridor in selected redevelopment areas
Mixed-use Development	Opportunities are assessed and identified	Complies (see discussion in this Land Use Element)
Mixed-use Development	Incentives, such as density bonuses, are considered and if appropriate, provided.	Incentives such as process streamlining are encouraged in the redevelopment strategy (see Chapter 4, Comprehensive Plan)
Mixed-use Development	Densities and intensities within mixed use development are higher than average in the community	The Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan offers densities/intensities consistent with redevelopment needs and City objectives
Mixed-use Development	Strive for a job-housing balance within a three to five mile area around a development site	Not directly implemented but considered for developments of regional impact
Traditional Neighborhood Development	Opportunities are assessed and identified	Complies. TND was considered and is implemented in part, but there is no specific TND district proposed
Infill Development	Acreage data for infill areas and redevelopment areas by type of land use are provided	Limited data are provided. More specific study of infill opportunities and responses to them is recommended
Infill Development	Residential infill development opportunities are identified, barriers are identified, and expected buildout is quantified	Constraints are identified, opportunities in a broad sense are identified; quantifying infill opportunities could be more refined
Infill Development	Incentives for encouraging infill development are considered	Market has resulted in development of infill sites, but more attention to this is needed
Infill Development	Non-residential infill development opportunities are identified, barriers are identified, and expected buildout is quantified	Limited data are provided. Strategy has focused on corridors. Barriers are addressed in redevelopment strategy (see Chapter 4)
Mixed-income Housing	Opportunities and barriers are identified and expected buildout in dwelling units is quantified	See description in Housing Element (Chapter 2)
Redeveloping Corridors	Corridors identified for redevelopment are identified and shown on growth policy map	Complies; Midtown Roswell (SR 9) is identified as a redevelopment corridor; study of Holcomb Bridge Road corridor is pending (2005)
Redeveloping Corridors	Expected buildout of redevelopment is quantified.	Complies; Midtown Roswell Redevelopment Plan quantifies desirable land use mixes
Redeveloping Corridors	Density bonuses and other incentives are considered and provided as appropriate	Complies; see Redevelopment Element (Chapter 4)
Greyfield Redevelopment	Opportunities are assessed and identified	Not referred to as such but reasonably implied within Redevelopment Element (see Chapter 4)
Greyfield Redevelopment	The amount of land zoned commercial is reduced if necessary to support this tool	Complies; Roswell's commercial strategy is the reuse of centers versus zoning for new ones
Overlay Districts	A map or definition of areas where overlay districts apply is provided	Complies; see overall development concept map and descriptions of character areas
Conservation Subdivisions	Conservation subdivisions are permitted in at least one zoning district by right and built within designated areas	Complies; see Article 28 of City Zoning Ordinance
Jobs-Housing Balance	Ratios of jobs-to-housing units are provided for appropriate geographic areas	Plan does not meet this best practice.
Jobs-Housing Balance	Jobs-housing balance policies exist	Plan discusses jobs-housing balance but finds specific policies are not needed

ROSWELL'S GUIDING LAND USE PRINCIPLES

Upon showing the relative consistency with the Atlanta Regional Commissions Regional Development Plan (RDP) policies and best land use practices, the policy framework for land use in Roswell shifts attention to its own set of guiding principles and policies for land use.

Guiding Land Use Principle #1: Protect, support and maintain the City's many fine and stable neighborhoods.

Emphasis is placed on land use compatibility using such techniques as creating transition in land use intensity stepping down from high-intensity commercial or industrial uses to low-intensity single-family residential developments. This is often achieved by locating intervening uses that have intermediate intensities (professional offices or townhouses, for instance) or creating separations through natural buffers. Intrusions into neighborhoods by incompatible uses that would proceed domino-fashion up local streets as an extension of commercial uses fronting on major thoroughfares should be avoided.

Guiding Land Use Principle #2: Respect and maintain prevailing land use patterns.

Very little of Roswell's land remains vacant and available for development. With the exception of a few large vacant properties in the far northwestern portion of the City, future development will occur on tracts ranging from 10s (not 100s) of acres down to single lots within existing neighborhoods. Prevailing land use patterns are well established by existing development that surrounds or borders these development properties and clearly indicate appropriate use of these vacant lands. Infill is therefore encouraged if compatible with surrounding existing development.

Guiding Land Use Principle #3: Encourage a higher level of livability in future multi-family communities while reducing their impact on the City.

High-density housing in Roswell should continue to be primarily clustered within major transportation corridors where transit services can be economically provided, and should be located near commercial areas where pedestrian access can be encouraged.

Past experience with multi-family development in Roswell—especially the suburban garden apartment type of complex—has resulted in unrelieved seas of rooftops and parking lots with little open space and minimal amenities. To a great extent, this has been due to a basically low-density design developed at a higher density (up to 14 units per acre). As a policy, Roswell intends to discourage multi-family densities over five units per acre (with the exception of the overlay districts) in order to encourage design that will create more livable multi-family communities in the future.

Guiding Land Use Principle #4: Encourage redevelopment of obsolete or economically deteriorating areas.

Obsolete or heavily impacted areas can devolve into slums unless viable alternatives are available that can generate economically sound reuse of the area. Deteriorating residential areas (such as those close to and east of downtown) should be encouraged to transition or redevelop to appropriate uses that will not disrupt the fabric of the neighborhood or the City. This principle has specific and unique application to suburban-style commercial developments

that are being passed over by retailers seeking more modern facilities or better competitive locations. For more information see the Redevelopment Element (Chapter 4).

Guiding Land Use Principle #5: Emphasize redevelopment over expansion of commercial uses into new and unforeseen areas.

Encourage redevelopment of obsolete or deteriorating commercial sites, and support the redevelopment to provide a mixture of uses (including residential). Give preference to development proposals that increase intensities on properties that are presently commercial over the establishment of new and unforeseen commercial areas that may result in the abandonment and boarding up of older shopping centers and stores.

An important strategy to encourage redevelopment over excessive expansion is to discourage any new commercial rezoning that is not consistent with the land use plan, particularly for general commercial (as opposed to neighborhood commercial) uses. To the extent that the future land use map shows less land for commercial development than the market may demand over the next 20 years, the economic feasibility of redeveloping and densifying existing commercial centers will increase.

Guiding Land Use Principle #6: Restrict light industrial development opportunities to employment-oriented non-manufacturing uses in appropriate locations.

Roswell's light industrial area is appropriately located relative to similar uses in neighboring Alpharetta, and has excellent access to the state highway system (limiting traffic impacts on City residents) provided that development intensities are kept low. Since vacant light industrial land within the area is roughly adequate to meet anticipated future market demand, no new industrial areas are proposed in the City. Uses that should be encouraged in the industrial area include business parks, wholesale companies and showrooms, light assembly or fabrication, business equipment supply or repair, and distribution facilities for local deliveries.

Guiding Land Use Principle #7: Protect the capacity of major thoroughfares through nodal development techniques. Discourage additional strip commercial development.

New commercial areas should be focused in nodes around major intersections, rather than spread out lineally along roadways. Intervening areas along major thoroughfares between nodes should be developed or planned with residential subdivisions having reverse frontage lots that back up to the thoroughfare, or with multi-family communities. Where residential development is not feasible, low intensity professional office uses or institutional uses are acceptable alternatives to strip commercial.

The demand for "big box" redevelopment (uses similar to Home Depot, Sam's Warehouse and Target that have a regional draw) should be met only where appropriate, and then by restricting such uses to identified commercial nodes along major thoroughfares where traffic accessibility is optimized.

Guiding Land Use Principle #8: In newly annexed areas, respect the zoning and land uses previously approved by Fulton County.

Fulton County maintains a sophisticated and citizen-oriented planning program and completed plans for areas that are now a part of the City. The Comprehensive Plan and implementing

regulations should respect and protect the county's prior determinations of appropriate land use, as expected by the residents and property owners of such areas now within Roswell.

Guiding Land Use Principle #9: Detached Versus Attached Residential Ratio.

Roswell strives to maintain a detached residential versus attached residential ratio of 65:35. The residential ratios by planning area (see Table 2.2 of this Comprehensive Plan) should be utilized in deliberation of land use decisions. (Note, this was added by amendment October 11, 2004).

Guiding Land Use Principle #10: Density Changes.

It is the intention of the Mayor and Council that in the event that a land use classification corresponds with a zoning district and that zoning district's density changes due to a zoning text amendment, the zoning text shall supercede the land use density represented on the City's land use map and such land use map shall be amended with the next major update to the City's Comprehensive Plan. (Note, this was added by amendment October 11, 2004).

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP

Development in Roswell over the next 20 years can be seen as a continuation—a build out—of land use patterns and trends that have been established over the past thirty years or more. Some older, non-historic areas will redevelop to more economically viable and appropriate uses when financially feasible. Some currently vacant properties will be developed for uses that are planned but for which the zoning is not yet in place. A trend toward intensification and mixed-use redevelopment of existing low-intensity commercial centers is anticipated, as well as an upswing in employment-oriented offices for people who are no longer dependent on long commutes to work (particularly where transit is available).

Virtually none of Roswell's land will remain undeveloped by the year 2020. Table 9.11 shows the amount of the City (in acres) that is expected to be developed for each of the future land use categories discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as totals and percent of total land area for each category. The future land use map has been prepared under the guiding land use principles, described above. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, of course, all figures reflect the city limits as they currently exist since the dynamics involved in annexation are too complex and/or uncertain to allow accurate predictions of future expansions.

FUTURE LAND USE BY PLANNING AREA

Key implications of the future land use plan are articulated in this section according to the eight planning areas described earlier in this Land Use Element. Refer to Map 9.1 for boundaries of these eight planning areas. Description is limited here to major land use trends expected during the planning horizon.

Planning Area 1: Central Roswell

- Infill development, primarily commercial and townhouses, along the east side of Atlanta Street south of the Town Square.
- Single-family infill subdivisions may be developed on steeply sloping lands north of Riverside Road, and along the north side of Grimes Bridge Road.

- Additional commercial development may occur between Dogwood Road Extension and Georgia 400.
- A transition of the older residential neighborhood along Zion Circle and Myrtle Street to office and high-density residential uses may occur. This area has potential for new office uses adjacent to City Hall along Forrest Street and moderate-income residences along Myrtle Street and Zion Circle. Redevelopment will likely occur south of City Hall.
- Government uses, such as expansion of municipal facilities, may be needed during the planning horizon and might appropriately be located near or adjacent to the detention center and municipal complex.
- The small, light industrial area south of City Hall may witness some pressure to expand; however, the plan does not support expansion of this small industrial area.

Planning Area 2: Southwest Roswell

- Some pressure may be evident to expand the neighborhood commercial node at the SR 120/Coleman Road intersection to the east along Marietta Highway or north on Coleman Road, but such expansion is not supported in the Comprehensive Plan.
- There is also some potential for additional medium-density residential development along the north side of Marietta Highway. This is permitted and anticipated if density is consistent with the future land use plan map.

Planning Area 3: West Central Roswell

- The vast majority of development in Planning Area 3 will occur on infill parcels or individual subdivision lots.
- The existing residential land use pattern moving east to west from medium-density single-family neighborhoods to suburban densities to estate residential in the northwestern quadrant will be maintained.
- A continuing care residential facility is under construction at the southwest quadrant of Woodstock and Crossville roads.

Planning Area 4: Northwest Roswell

- By 2020, almost 80 percent of the area will be built out with single-family neighborhoods, variously at suburban residential densities to the east at Crabapple and to the west, south of Mountain Park; low-density in the central southern portion (including Brookfield West); and very low-density estate residential in the northern portion bordering on Cherokee County.
- The commercial nodes at (1) Crossville Road between Mountain Park Road and Hardscrabble Road and (2) Crabapple (silos) node (shared with Alpharetta), are not proposed for expansion beyond the area currently developed or already zoned for nonresidential use.

- Commercialization of Hardscrabble Road from State Route 92 is to be avoided.

Planning Area 5: North Central Roswell

- The industrial area may be completely built out within five years.
- The largest amount of new development is projected for the commercial category, particularly general commercial, as the SR 9, Mansell Road, and Holcomb Bridge Road strips reach full development. Some minor expansion of the Crabapple Road/Crossville Road node may occur with offices extending north and south. The Hardscrabble Road/Crabapple Road intersection may expand further with offices transitioning southerly to Sweetapple Elementary School at Etris Road.
- Commercialization of Hardscrabble Road from State Route 92 is to be avoided.

Planning Area 6: Northeast Roswell

- Additional office-professional development is possible in the Georgia 400/Holcomb Bridge Road interchange area.
- New office development with ancillary commercial uses along Holcomb Bridge Road is probable in the Centennial High School area.
- Prospects exist for infill at the development node on Holcomb Bridge Road at Nesbit Ferry Road.

Planning Area 7: East Central Roswell

- One of the larger undeveloped parcels in Roswell exists in this planning area, along Old Alabama Road between Holcomb Bridge Road and Riverside Drive, just east of Georgia 400. It is zoned for multi-story office and commercial use (OCMS).
- Residential development will fill in vacant properties and subdivision lots at densities already established by surrounding development and zoning patterns.
- A property of particular interest is the large vacant tract lying along Holcomb Bridge Road west of Eves Road. Directly across Holcomb Bridge Road from the site is vacant land already zoned for office. A low density residential use has been designated for the site because of its unusually steep slopes and resulting limited development potential.

Planning Area 8: East Roswell

- The majority of the new residential development planned for Planning Area 8 is single-family subdivisions at densities consistent with surrounding neighborhoods. The limited increase in high-density development is anticipated on infill parcels that are already approved for such use.

- Retail commercial and office development in the planning area are anticipated on vacant properties already approved for such uses. Importantly, no new retail commercial uses are shown on the southern side of Holcomb Bridge Road; all such nonresidential development is to be office-professional in nature.

POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC USES

The future development of several specific land uses are subject to policies of the Mayor and City Council that influence their location or other associated development factors.

Cell Towers

The City has adopted a policy and ordinance provisions regarding the location of telecommunications towers. The City's policy is generally to allow such uses only in commercial and light industrial areas or on City-owned properties (see master siting plan available from the Community Development Department). Alternative camouflaged or concealed tower structures may be considered for placement by the Mayor and City Council, regardless of zoning district.

Churches

Churches, when located in residential areas, can lead to several potential problems. The scope of development of modern church facilities has grown over the years from a scale compatible with residential areas to a scale that can have major negative impacts—traffic, noise and visual—on the quality of life in nearby neighborhoods. On the one hand, “mega-churches” have come into vogue that can seat 10,000 worshipers or more; on the other hand, “accessory” uses such as child and adult day care, K-12 parochial schools, outreach ministries and counseling centers can extend the impact of a church complex far beyond that of the sanctuary itself.

The Mayor and City Council welcome new churches and other places of worship into the community, support expansion of existing facilities, and value their contribution to the City's residents and the quality of life enjoyed by all. Locational issues and regulations, however, need attention in order to assure religious freedom and access to facilities for worship without unnecessarily impacting specific neighborhoods in the process.

Schools

Elementary, middle and high schools, like churches, are important elements of the fabric of society in Roswell and are welcome contributors to the City's quality of life. However, schools can also have negative impacts on neighborhoods depending on their location, scale, site planning and access patterns. Although the City has no regulatory authority over public schools, private schools are conditional rather than permitted uses in residential districts.

Housing for Seniors

The Mayor and City Council recognize that the population demographics of Roswell's residents, along with the country as a whole, will increasingly shift to an aging profile. As Roswell's residents get older and the children no longer live at home, the City wishes to assure that people who live in Roswell will be able to stay in the community as their housing needs shift away from the single-family detached home. With regard to assisted housing communities and nursing homes, the City encourages their development. Such facilities are considered

particularly appropriate in locations where transit, shopping and community facilities are available on a pedestrian scale.

Neighborhood Shopping

Much of Roswell's retail commercial development has been scaled at the regional level, attracting shoppers from communities and counties outside of the City. Such facilities are very appropriate on major thoroughfares where accessibility is adequate, and they serve Roswell residents as well as visitors to the City. In addition, the Mayor and City Council support development of retail uses at the neighborhood scale, at designated locations that are convenient to Roswell's neighborhoods and do not require long trips to shopping centers for minor purchases. Locations for such facilities are shown on the future land use map.

The Comprehensive Plan does not provide for small-scale uses (e.g., convenience store) within or near established neighborhoods. However, as a part of future mixed use developments, neighborhood serving commercial uses might be considered, as appropriate.

Office Campuses

As a policy, the Mayor and City Council support the development, in designated locations, of major employment centers occupied by businesses whose employee profiles match the executive and managerial occupations of the City's residents. These businesses would be employment resources for Roswell residents and contribute to lower vehicle miles traveled rates and shorter commutes. The future land use map shows appropriate locations for such development.

Big Box Commercial

"Big box" redevelopment (uses similar to Home Depot, Sam's Warehouse and Target that have a regional draw) should be restricted to identified commercial nodes along major thoroughfares where traffic accessibility is optimized. The Comprehensive Plan supports regulations, already adopted, that limit single commercial retail occupants to no more than 65,000 square feet of floor area, unless such space already existed (with the exception of the Parkway Village designation for corporate campuses).